

History of SS. Anthony and Margaret Parish Allouez, Superior, Wisconsin

In 1913, Reverend Joseph M. Koudelka, Bishop of Superior, assisted by the very Reverend Provincial Samuel Macke, O.F.M., secured a Franciscan Father, Reverend Rudolph Hanssens, from Belgium, to administer to the growing needs of the Belgium people residing in the vicinity of Allouez. Rev. Father Eustace Vollmer, O.F.M., who was the pastor of St. Francis Xavier parish from 1882 to 1915, with his friendly ways and love for souls, had taken care of them. Surmounting many difficulties and with untiring zeal, Rev. Father Rudolph began the arduous task of establishing the new parish. The parish limits of St. Francis, which extended from Central Park to Itasca, now by reason of this new congregation, ended with the Nemadji River.

The property, acquired and now owned by the Benjamin's of the city parishes compromises Block 45 on East Third Street and Block 46 on East Fourth Street, is the handsome gift of James Bardon and Emma Bardon, his wife. Five additional lots on Baltic Street were donated by Emma Corrigan, June 1916. The congregation was incorporated in accordance with the laws of Wisconsin, August 24, 1914, under

the title of SS. Anthony and Margaret

In soliciting funds for the erection of the new Church, Father Rudolph encountered many obstacles. The valiant priest, however, conquered them all. In a short time, the burden was considered lightened and the financial condition of the parish through the self-sacrificing labors of this Franciscan Father, was made entirely secure.

The Church was built during the summer of 1914. It cost \$4,200 and was paid for by the Belgian people.

While the Church was being constructed, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass was offered in the Woodman Hall. Here, Father Rudolph cared for the little flock that was entrusted to his care from May until October. At first, they numbered only about twenty people. On Saturday night and the eves of the Holy Days, Father Rudolph found a warm welcome and lodging at Mr. Frank Want or Mr. Leon Jaques, where he had his meals also. The remaining days of the week were spent at the monastery at East End with Father Eustace.

The First Holy Mass was offered in the new Church the latter part of October, 1914.

Father Rudolph had made a promise that the first Church he would build, should be dedicated to St. Margaret of Cartona, a Franciscan saint. Through the influence of Father Eustace, it was also dedicated to St. Anthony, another favorite saint of the Franciscans. Thus, the Church received the title of SS. Anthony and Margaret.

Three Franciscan saints graced the altar, which had been donated by the Franciscan fathers through Father Eustace, St. Anthony of Padua, St. Margaret of Cortona and St. Colette.

The statue of St. Anthony was donated by Mrs. Heytens.

St. Margaret's statue donor was unknown and St. Colette was donated by Mrs. Peter DeCleene.

The perpetual light was a donation from Mrs. DeCleene also.

The first altar linens and priest's vestments were donated by the Poor Clares of Antwerp, Belgium. Father Rudolph brought with him: one ostensorium, one chalice, one ciborium with cloth cover, one altar stone, five chasubles, every color with accessories, two albs, two surplices, two copes, one velum, three stoles, two sets of altar cloths, two candlesticks, one crucifix, six corporals three palls, six amices, six cinctures, two Missals, red leather canons and cruets.

The sanctuary carpet was donated by Mr. Heyten's two sisters; Mrs. Dezitter and Mrs. Pieren, who lived in Duluth and who were old acquaintances of Father Rudolph.

Mrs. Cole, with the help of eight donors, was instrumental in procuring the statue of the Infant of Prague: Mrs. Want, Mrs. VandenBerghe, Mrs. Powels, Mrs. Gotelaere, Mrs. Leeman, Mrs. Meys, and Mrs. Vergauwen.

Paul Heytens was the donor of the Holy Family statue.

The smaller Sacred Heart statue was a donation from Mrs. E. DeBruyne

The Stations of the Cross were donated by the Franciscan Sisters of Bayfield and canonically erected on July 25, 1915 by Father Eustace.

The statues of the Sacred Heart, the Holy Family, the Infant of Prague, St. Margaret and St. Colette and St. Francis were moved to the school.

After the Church was built, as a night's lodging, before Sundays and Holy Days, Father Rudolph remained in the boy's sacristy, often with great inconvenience and discomfort. Mrs. Corrigan from East End furnished the bed and blankets. Here, Father Rudolph partook of his frugal meals whenever he did not accept the invitation of a thoughtful parishioner. Three years were spent like this.

The congregation consisted of 39 families in 1915.

It was Father Rudolph's desire to establish a parochial school. He shared with all the Franciscan fathers the conviction that there should be a Catholic school in every parish. His desires, however, were not realized because of existing conditions. In 1917, he relinquished the pastorate of Allouez and transferred his endeavors to other fields of the Lord's work.

In the same year, Rev. Francis Bertram, secretary to Bishop Koudelka, took temporary charge of this congregation. His administration, distinguished by executive ability and thoroughness, soon won the hearts of the entire parish. The English speaking Catholics, who lived within the confines of the parish, with episcopal approval, and under the guidance of Father Bertram, in perfect harmony, joined their forces to the achievements of the Belgians.

Working hand in hand, the congregation, comprising then about 400, looked forward to a bright future when their hopes for a Catholic school and a residing pastor, who could give them his undivided attention, would be realized.

Father Bertram in the following year was appointed pastor of St. Mary's Church of Rhinelander, Wisconsin and the Rev. Father William J. Kubelbeck was placed in charge of the Allouez parish in July, 1918, having succeeded the Rev Father Bertram, also secretary to Bishop Koudelka.

In 1919, Father Kubelback procured a new altar from Italy, which replaced the one donated by the Franciscan priests. The latter was transferred to the side where it remained until 1925 when it was used in the school chapel.

The beautiful and new imported altar, with its charming golden tabernacle, is graced with the Last Supper, and artistic work of hand carved wood; and also hand carved statues of the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph. The hand carved statue of the Sacred Heart, which originally belonged to the new altar, was placed as the center statue of the main altar.

A life sized, hand carved statue of St. Francis Xavier was received from Bishop Koudelka, as also two angels holding torches, which were fastened on the walls of the sanctuary until 1928 when they were replaced.

The Church was painted inside and out in 1920 and new electric lights were installed.

In 1921, a new organ was purchased. Six large, new candlesticks were donated by Mrs. Want, Mrs. Art LaVerge, Mrs. DeGeest, Mrs. Jacques and Mrs. Gouldie. The latter also presented the votive stand. Mrs. Dens crocheted and donated an altar lace.

In January, 1923, the envelope system was introduced into the parish. The congregation was beginning to reap the fruits of the arduous labors of its founder, Father Rudolph, and the efficient administration of Father Bertram and therefore, began to grow and flourish. Soon the parishioners raised sufficient funds to build a suitable residence for the priest and in the course of one year, built and furnished the \$8000 rectory. Thus, in December 1923, the desire for a resident pastor had been realized.

The parish then built a school at the cost of \$45000. When the school opened, September 1925, 98 pupils enrolled. Three Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration from LaCrosse were the teachers. Only four grades were admitted the first year, grades three to six. Next year, the school reopened with an enrollment of 152 including grades one to seven.

Need for an assistant to help the pastor administer to the 275 families became evident. For nine years, Fr. Leo Block, superintendent of St. Joseph's Children's Home, helped on Sundays and Holy Days. In September 1950, Father Tracy was appointed as first assistant. In order to have suitable accommodations for the priests, the old rectory was entirely remodeled at the cost of \$22,000. A new parish office and living quarters for the assistant were added and the entire building was faced with the brick veneer.

On July 6, Father Leo J. Krynski was assigned as assistant to Father Kubelbeck. He replaced Tracy who left to study in Rome. After his Roman studies, Tracy returned to head the diocesan marriage tribunal and became the second editor of the diocesan newspaper. He was editor from 1955 to 1963.

Other associate pastors were Father Edward Theiler (1956-1959), who later became diocesan superintendent of schools; and Father Harold Dodge (1959-1963) who was to become vocations director and diocesan director of religious education.

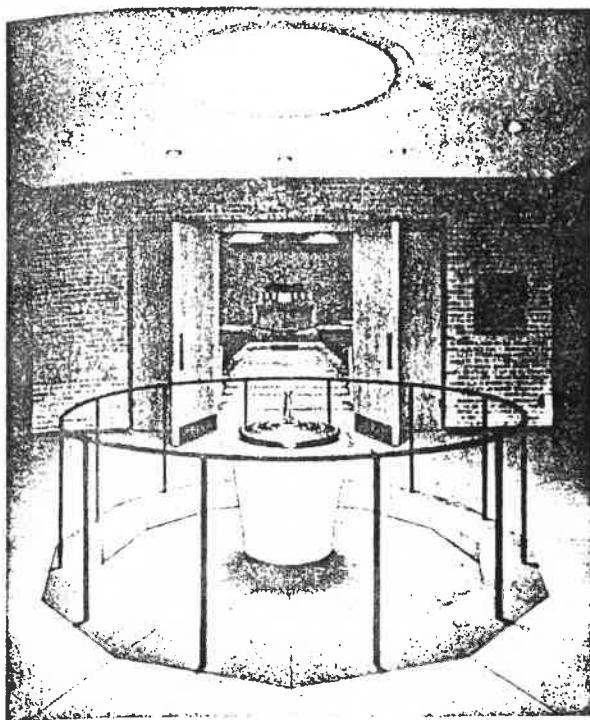
After Dodge, the parish had no associate pastors, but priests serving in the city as teachers at the Cathedral school lived at the rectory; these were Father Casimir Paul and Father William Speerstra. Father James Hoffman, as chancellor and secretary to Bishop Hammes, and Father Vincent Lynch, as assistant chancellor and secretary to the bishop, made their residence at the parish.

In September 1957 construction began on a new \$350,000 church-rectory complex. The new church was the first in the diocese to express the spirit and norms of the diocesan building directives issued by the diocesan liturgical commission in 1957.

Father William Wenninger, chairman of the diocesan liturgical commission at that time, wrote, "Discerning visitors will be deeply impressed by the well ordered simplicity and grave dignity of the church of St. Anthony...the church is clean and strong, expressing the spiritual strength and incorruptability of God's people...disguise, pretense and superficially have been strictly avoided... all this merits for this church the designation as good contemporary church architecture."

Following the death of Kubelbeck in 1962, Father Louis Nowak was appointed pastor and served in the capacity until June 1969. He was succeeded by Father Peter Makk whose pastorate extended to July 1975. Father James Hoffman was appointed temporary administrator for one year, until the appointment of Father Pius Machalones; as pastor on July 14, 1976. He served as pastor until his death on November 21, 1982. On August 3, 1983, Father Vincent Lynch was named pastor of the Allouez parish. Besides continuing in this position, Lynch was the assistant chancellor of the diocese and secretary to the bishop. Father Lynch left the parish in June of 1986 and at the present time we have as pastor, Father Raymond Schoone, who in addition to being pastor, is the Judicial Vicar of the Superior Diocese.

DEDICATION OF THE NEW CHURCH



St. Anthony's congregation observed the dedication of it's new Church on October 30, 1958, by Bishop Joseph J. Annabring with the Cardinal Albert Meyer as homilist. The church and rectory was designed by Robert G. Cerney of Cerney Associates, Minneapolis. In 1961 the St. Anthony Church received an award as one of the ten best structures submitted to the judging committee for the fifth annual awards program sponsored by the Minnesota Society of Architects, the state chapter of the American Institute of Architects.

Bishop Annabring was escorted by ministers and Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus. A large number of visiting clergy and parishioners witnessed the rite. Two of the assisting ministers were two priests - sons of the parish, Fr. Francis Ebner, O.M.I. and Fr. Francis Madsen, O.F.M. At the time of the dedication, His Excellency inserted and sealed in the altar stone relics of St. Stephen, St. Maria Goretti, St. Dominic, St. Margaret of Cortona and St. Therese of the Child Jesus.

Music for the dedication and solemn pontifical Mass was sung by the women's choir of the parish, with Miss Sally Maas directing and Sister Mary Johnetta, FSPA, accompanying.

